

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTION - ORIGINAL FOLLOWS

Veteran Communist

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Principles and Objectives

In his first major address to the nations, Taraki declared the government's support for democracy and respect for private property. He asserted that its immediate objectives were territorial integrity, national sovereignty, national sovereignty, independence, economic progress, and the defense of the revolution. He outlined a 23 point domestic program that included land reform; the strengthening of the

Nur Mohammad TARAKI
(Phonetic: taRAkee)

AFGHANISTAN

*President; Chairman,
Revolutionary Council;
Prime Minister*
(since April 1978)



Three days after the 27 April 1978 coup that ousted President Mohammad Daoud, the Revolutionary Council (RC) of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, in its first decree, named Nur Mohammad Taraki Chairman of the RC, President and Prime Minister. Taraki is a professional Communist who was chairman of the Central Committee of the Khalq (People) Party at the time of the coup; he presumably occupies the same position in the new People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). As Chief of State, Head of Government, Chairman of the RC, head of the party and "founder of the revolution," he is the leading figure in the new government. He is nevertheless virtually unknown to the outside world and not particularly well known even in his own country.

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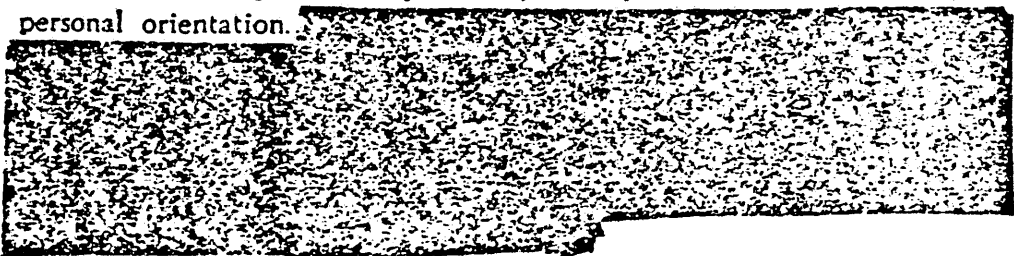
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state sector of the economy; and the abolition of feudal conditions, "oppression," smuggling, gambling and alcoholism. In foreign affairs he specified seven principles, including the need for good relations with all of Afghanistan's neighbors and support for peace, disarmament, national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a homeland for the Palestinians, the Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Charter.

Taraki is a sophisticated politician, who equivocates when describing his personal orientation.



On the High Wire

Taraki faces a number of imperatives. Probably the most important of these is the need to keep the PDPA together by fending off a repetition of the 1967 split and reconciling the ambitions of colleagues such as Babrak Karmal, his former archrival and now Vice Chairman of the RC, and Col. Abdul Qader, the air force officer who played a key role in the coup and now occupies two crucial positions—Chief of the Defense Force and Minister of National Defense. Taraki must prove himself quickly as a leader, for if the suddenness of his accession to power finds him unprepared to deal effectively with the problems that surround him, others may seek to wrest power from him.

Early Life and Career

The son of a shepherd, Nur Mohammad Taraki was born on 14 July 1917 in Meymaneh (now Faryab) Province, in northwestern Afghanistan and was raised in Moqor in Chazni Province in southeastern Afghanistan. As a Pushtun, he is a member of Afghanistan's largest ethnic group (about 50 percent of the population) and one that has been politically dominant for centuries. He received formal schooling through the fourth grade. From 1937 to 1939 he attended night school while working as a fruit company clerk in Bombay, India. During 1939-40 he was a correspondent for the *Kabul Economic Journal*. Entering government service as a junior officer in the Ministry of Press and Information in 1940, he served successively as deputy director of Radio Kabul (1941-42), deputy director of the official Bakhtar News Agency (1942-44), and director of the liaison office of the Ministry of Public Works (1944-47). From 1947 to 1950 he was director general of the Petroleum and Sugar Department in the Ministry of Agriculture, and from 1950 to 1951 he was director general of publications in the Ministry of Press and Information. He was editor-in-chief of the Bakhtar News Agency during 1951-52.

In 1952 Taraki became press attache at the Embassy in Washington. (He claimed that he had been "exiled" to Washington because of his criticism of the Afghan Government.) When Mohammad Daoud became Prime Minister in 1953, he ordered Taraki to return home. Taraki publicly announced in Washington that he had resigned in protest against Daoud's "dictatorial" regime. Nevertheless, six weeks later he returned to Afghanistan. For the next 10 years, according to Taraki, the government prevented him from getting a job. It was only by bribing the police, he claimed, that he was able to work as a translator and secretary for the UN Technical Assistance Mission in Kabul (about 1955), as interpreter and translator for the US Operations Mission in Kabul (about 1958), as head of his own translation service (1958) and as a translator for the US Embassy in Kabul (1962-63). These difficult years probably fed his hatred of the Daoud Regime.

Personal Data

A slim, white-haired man, Taraki looks somewhat older than his years. He dresses simply but properly. He has a ready smile and a soft-spoken, kindly manner, and he shows empathy, but he can be hardheaded. Taraki traveled to the USSR in 1965 or 1966 for medical treatment—his right leg is numb at the knee. During his 42-day sojourn there he visited Moscow, Leningrad and the Georgian SSR. He speaks excellent, though somewhat halting English. He has written novels.

Taraki was married in 1942. His wife, the former Mirian Nur, is uneducated. The couple has no children. Taraki has at least three brothers: as of 1969, two were minor officials in the Ministry of Information and Culture, and one owned a trucking firm.

8 June 1978